

**Summary of the
Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) Teleconference
June 4, 1998**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) convened by teleconference on Thursday, June 4, 1998 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The meeting was led by its co-chairs, Dr. Wilson Hershey of Lancaster Laboratories and Ms. Ramona Trovato, EPA. A list of action items is provided in Attachment A and a list of participants is provided in Attachment B.

Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Hershey welcomed the participants and made introductions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 16, 1998 ELAB Teleconference were approved.

Proposed charter, membership, and products of the Third Party Assessors Subcommittee

Dr. William Kavanagh and Ms. Sandra Wroblewski reviewed the latest version of the Third Party Assessor Subcommittee Charter. After discussion, the following recommendations were made.

- For item 1, the first bullet, Ms. Trovato will check with the Office of General Counsel (OGC)¹¹ about conducting a survey and it will read as follows, "Determine what states requirements are for Third Party Assessors (TPAs) and determine what requirements they have for support by third party assessors." The second bullet, i.e "Survey Third Party Assessors and summarize services they can provide," will be deleted.
- For item 2, the wording is changed to read, "Establish minimum credentials for third party assessors both individuals and organizations." This shall be supplemented with a list of training, capabilities and experience to assist states in the selection of third party assessors." The first step to accomplish this will be to "Review Chapter 6 to determine if the criteria are sufficient for the state to evaluate third party assessors and make recommendation for revision."

¹¹In subsequent discussion with Mr. Hale Hawbecker of OGC it was determined that this was not an appropriate function for a federal advisory committee as it does not constitute advice to EPA.

EPA Issues

Ms. Nancy Wentworth reported that the EMMC is working on consolidating their comments on the standards and expect to have them by the end of the month. The official Agency position will be sent to Ms. Carol Batterton, Chair of NELAC.

On-site Assessment Issues

Mr. Jerry Parr asked how assessors training would be consistent. Ms. Mourrain explained that in the On-site Assessment Standard, NELAP provides the necessary oversight for the assessor training. NELAP does not have the resources to perform that function. The On-site Assessment Committee is exploring the Registrar Accreditation Board (RAB). Mr. Mike Ross has given information to the committee, which favors using RAB. Ms. Wentworth will identify someone who can provide information on RAB at the next ELAB meeting.

Mr. Parr stated that before ELAB endorses an assessor training program that it needs to understand what the assessors and the assessment process. A discussion on the checklists ensued. A recommendation was made that ELAB form a work group to propose a checklist that would assure consistency at a reasonable level of detail and have an eye towards PBMS. Mr. Parr and Dr. Al Verstuyft agreed to co-chair the work group. Ms. Janet Hall agreed to assist the group and it was suggested that Ms. Wentworth and Mr. Wayne Davis be asked to assist also. Ms. Trovato charged the subcommittee to come to the July meeting with a checklist and very specific recommendations to NELAC before the vote is taken on adopting the checklists.

Continuation of ELAB vs. former Coordination Committee

Dr. Hershey explained that concern has been expressed that ELAB might disappear with a future Administration and that this forum of input would no longer be available. Ms. Trovato responded that the Board members could help insure continuation of ELAB and that the only reason a coordination committee was ever formed was that they were copying the NIST model for Weights and Measures. Due to the FACA law the committee could not provide consensus advice and was eliminated. The only way NELAC can take consensus advice from the private sector is through a federal advisory committee. Mr. Parr expressed concern about the Program Policy and Structure Committee and its future role. Ms. Mourrain stated that the NELAC Board of Directors had agreed that the Program Policy and Structure Committee was still needed and should not be dissolved. Ms. Mourrain suggested that the private sector should be solicited for volunteers to serve on the committee.

Accrediting Authority - Conflict-of-Interest

Dr. Hershey proposed that ELAB review the final language and put this on the July agenda. Ms. Mourrain stated that the proposed changes are on the Bulletin Board for review.

Simultaneous Approval of Laboratories

Ms. Mourrain stated that after the accrediting authorities are approved a meeting should be held to discuss what is a reasonable time frame for them to assess laboratories under NELAC. After receiving the applications a review will need to be made to see if enough time has been allowed for each state to accredit the laboratories that have applied. Once the time frame has been set, the states will evaluate the laboratories and after they have all been evaluated, then they will all be approved at the same time. Subsequent applicant laboratories will be allowed to come into the system on a first come first serve basis and they will be evaluated on an individual time line by the states. Ms. Mourrain stated that a database is being developed by Mr. Jim Stemmler along with other EPA personnel that will be available as a means of tracking the laboratory accreditation.

Agenda for July 1, 1998 meeting at NELAC IV

Ms. Trovato announced that in Dr. Hershey's absence Mr. Bill Kavanaugh will be co-chairing the meeting with her. The following agenda items were proposed: checklist, to include advice and recommendations dealing with consistency, a reasonable level of detail, and with an eye toward making PBMS a reality; third party assessor workgroup with a brief listing of the members; Accrediting Authority Conflict-of-Interest Issue, ELAB recommendation to the proposed Standards.

A discussion ensued on the issue of creating a standing committee on the Sampling and Field Measurement Committee. A concern was expressed that it will be hard for some states to get NELAC approval if they go back to broaden the scope of what had already been presented to their legislative bodies. A recommendation was made to support the establishment of a standing committee to start working on the field sampling issues and with the charter to make sure they include all these other interests that have not been represented before we see any standards proposed.

Other Business

Mr. Parr had two items to discuss. One was the editorial change in the NELAC standards of "calendar days" to "working days". Ms. Mourrain reported that this change was recommended, but has since been reversed.. The second item was the issue of EPA issuing a document setting forth the concentration ranges in equations for accepting determinable acceptable limits of PT samples. He stated that there have been examples where the true value would not be an acceptable result. Mr. David Friedman stated that they are aware of the problem and it will be corrected.

Action Items
Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB)
June 4, 1998

Item No.	Action	Date Completed
1.	Ms. Trovato will check with the Office of General Counsel about conducting surveys.	
2.	The Subcommittee on Assessor Training was charged with presenting specific recommendations to NELAC regarding checklists.	
3.	ELAB members were asked to solicit volunteers from the private sector to serve on the Program Policy and Structure Committee.	
4.	ELAB members were asked to review the changes to the Accrediting Authority Chapter.	
5.	Ms. Mourrain is to prepare a response regarding the recommendations from the January meeting.	

Attachment B

List of Participants Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Teleconference June 4, 1998

Name	Affiliation	Telephone Numbers
Dr. Wilson Hershey Co-chair	Lancaster Laboratories, Inc. Representing ACIL	Tel: 717-656-2300 Fax: 717-656-0450 E: jwhershey@lancasterlabs.com
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Ms. Sandra Wroblewski	Kemper/NATLSCO Representing AIHA	Tel: 847-320-2487 Fax: 847-320-4331 E: swroblew@kemperinsurance.com
Ms. Nancy Wentworth (Invited Guest)	USEPA	Tel: 202-564- Fax: 202-565-2441 E: wentworth.nancy@epamail.epa.gov
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